

International Veterinary Chiropractic Association (IVCA) Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

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- 1. Stringhalt is most often seen in which animals?**
 - A. Horses**
 - B. Dogs**
 - C. Cattle**
 - D. Cats**

- 2. Which option lists the components that form the borders of the spinal canal?**
 - A. Body/Corpus; Pedicles (2); Laminae**
 - B. Pedicles (2); Laminae**
 - C. Body/Corpus**
 - D. All of the above**

- 3. Most lamenesses in the front limbs are located below the which joint?**
 - A. Shoulder**
 - B. Fetlock**
 - C. Knee (stifle)**
 - D. Hip**

- 4. What is a joint mouse?**
 - A. A free joint body of cartilage or bone**
 - B. A calcified lesion on bone**
 - C. A tear in the meniscus**
 - D. A fracture of the tibial plateau**

- 5. Long-backed horses are prone to which problems?**
 - A. Vertebral problems**
 - B. Muscle or ligament problems**
 - C. Dental problems**
 - D. Gastric ulcers**

- 6. Name one of the two most important functions of the vertebral column in the quadruped.**
- A. Carry part of body mass**
 - B. Produce red blood cells**
 - C. Digest nutrients**
 - D. Store minerals**
- 7. Chronic organ dysfunction can cause vertebral subluxations via which reflex?**
- A. Viscerosomatic reflex**
 - B. Somatosomatic reflex**
 - C. Proprioceptive reflex**
 - D. Monosynaptic reflex**
- 8. The resting membrane potential is typically around which value?**
- A. -60 mV**
 - B. -65 mV**
 - C. -70 mV**
 - D. -75 mV**
- 9. Vertebral osteomyelitis is best described as which condition?**
- A. Spinal cord inflammation**
 - B. Degenerative spine disease**
 - C. Acute/chronic inflammation of bone**
 - D. Neoplastic bone growth**
- 10. Sympathetic regions are located in which areas?**
- A. Cranial and sacral**
 - B. Cranial and thoracic**
 - C. Thoracic and lumbar**
 - D. Sacral and lumbar**

Answers

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1. B
2. A
3. C
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. A
8. B
9. C
10. C

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Explanations

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1. Stringhalt is most often seen in which animals?

- A. Horses
- B. Dogs**
- C. Cattle
- D. Cats

Stringhalt is a hind limb gait abnormality that presents as an exaggerated, involuntary flexion or lifting of the hind leg during movement. This pattern is classically described in horses, where the high-stepping, “string-like” action is most often observed, especially in adult horses and in certain geographic regions. Because of its distinctive presentation in equines, horses are the species most commonly associated with stringhalt. While dogs, cattle, and cats can develop various neuromuscular issues, they do not typically exhibit this characteristic hind limb gait, so they are not the usual hosts for this condition. In horses, recognizing stringhalt as an equine-specific gait abnormality helps distinguish it from other causes of hind limb lameness or neurologic signs; in persistent cases, treatments such as surgical reduction of the extensor pull (for example, a partial tenectomy of the lateral digital extensor tendon) may be considered to improve gait.

2. Which option lists the components that form the borders of the spinal canal?

- A. Body/Corpus; Pedicles (2); Laminae**
- B. Pedicles (2); Laminae
- C. Body/Corpus
- D. All of the above

The borders of the spinal canal are formed by both the vertebral body in front and the vertebral arch behind and to the sides. The body provides the anterior boundary, while the arch elements—the pedicles and the laminae—construct the lateral and posterior walls. The pedicles connect the body to the arch and create the side walls, and the laminae complete the posterior roof of the canal. To enclose the canal, you need all three components together. If any one element is missing, the border is incomplete, which is why listing the body along with the pedicles and laminae gives the full set of borders. The other options leave out one of these essential parts, making them incomplete.

3. Most lamenesses in the front limbs are located below the which joint?

- A. Shoulder
- B. Fetlock
- C. Knee (stifle)**
- D. Hip

Lameness localization along the limb is the key idea. In forelimbs, many problems show up distal to the knee, meaning the boundary joint you refer to is the knee itself. The knee (in veterinary terms often the carpus) marks the proximal limit of the distal portion of the limb, where the fetlock, pastern, and coffin joints lie. Since these distal structures bear much of the impact and are common sites for pathology, most observable forelimb lameness originates below the knee. The parenthetical note about stifle is just a reminder that terminology can vary (stifle = knee in the hind limb), but the practical point remains: lameness is typically found below the knee joint.

4. What is a joint mouse?

- A. A free joint body of cartilage or bone**
- B. A calcified lesion on bone**
- C. A tear in the meniscus**
- D. A fracture of the tibial plateau**

A joint mouse is a loose body inside a joint, typically a fragment of cartilage or bone that has become detached and floats within the synovial space. This free-floating piece can move with the joint and may cause mechanical symptoms such as intermittent locking, catching, reduced range of motion, or pain during movement. They often originate from osteochondral fragments or degenerative changes in the joint, and are often found on imaging or during arthroscopy as a discrete, non-fixed body within the joint. This distinguishes them from a calcified lesion fixed to bone, a tear of the meniscus, or a fracture of the tibial plateau, none of which describe a free-floating intra-articular fragment.

5. Long-backed horses are prone to which problems?

- A. Vertebral problems**
- B. Muscle or ligament problems**
- C. Dental problems**
- D. Gastric ulcers**

Long-backed horses experience increased bending and twisting forces along the spine when they move or carry weight because the same load acts through a longer lever arm. The back's stability relies on a strong muscle envelope (epaxial muscles) and supporting ligaments. With a longer spine, these soft tissues must work harder to stabilize the thoracolumbar region, making them more prone to fatigue, tension, spasms, and strains, as well as ligament sprains. These soft-tissue problems are the most likely consequence of this conformation. Dental and gastric issues aren't causally tied to having a long back, and vertebral bone problems are not as directly linked to this body type as the muscle and ligament reactions are.

6. Name one of the two most important functions of the vertebral column in the quadruped.

- A. Carry part of body mass**
- B. Produce red blood cells**
- C. Digest nutrients**
- D. Store minerals**

The main thing being tested is the vertebral column's role in weight-bearing and posture in a quadruped. The spine acts as the central pillar that carries and distributes body mass along the back, helping to support the animal's frame and enable locomotion. The other major function is protection of the spinal cord, which runs through the vertebral canal, but that isn't one of the options here. Therefore, carrying part of body mass best reflects the spine's primary role among the choices. Producing red blood cells happens in bone marrow, digestion is handled by the digestive system, and while bones store minerals, weight-bearing is the more defining function of the vertebral column.

7. Chronic organ dysfunction can cause vertebral subluxations via which reflex?

- A. Viscerosomatic reflex**
- B. Somatosomatic reflex**
- C. Proprioceptive reflex**
- D. Monosynaptic reflex**

Chronic organ dysfunction can cause vertebral subluxations through a viscerosomatic reflex, where afferent input from a diseased visceral organ enters the spinal cord at the same segment that supplies the related paraspinal muscles and joints. This visceral signal triggers a reflex response that increases muscle tone and facet-joint stiffness in the adjacent vertebral segments, producing vertebral misalignment as a reflexive, segmentally linked reaction. Over time, this reflex activity can create or sustain subluxation patterns even in the absence of a primary spinal injury. Other reflex types either involve somatic input affecting somatic output, or are basic reflex arcs (proprioceptive or monosynaptic) not specifically driven by chronic visceral disease, so they don't explain the link between organ dysfunction and vertebral changes as clearly.

8. The resting membrane potential is typically around which value?

- A. -60 mV**
- B. -65 mV**
- C. -70 mV**
- D. -75 mV**

Resting membrane potential reflects the balance between ion gradients and membrane permeability. At rest, the membrane is most permeable to potassium through leak channels, so potassium ions tend to diffuse out, making the inside more negative. Sodium channels are less active, so sodium influx is limited. The Na⁺/K⁺ pump helps maintain the gradients by pumping Na⁺ out and K⁺ in, adding a small negative charge inside over time. Because the membrane is dominated by K⁺ permeability, the resting potential sits in a range near the potassium equilibrium zone, typically around -65 mV in many mammalian neurons. While values can vary among cell types, -65 mV is a common representative resting value. The other options are either less negative, closer to a neutral value, or more hyperpolarized than what is typically observed.

9. Vertebral osteomyelitis is best described as which condition?

- A. Spinal cord inflammation**
- B. Degenerative spine disease**
- C. Acute/chronic inflammation of bone**
- D. Neoplastic bone growth**

Vertebral osteomyelitis is infection-driven inflammation of bone in the spine. The term osteomyelitis means infection of bone with an inflammatory response occurring in the bone marrow and surrounding bone tissue, often spreading to the vertebral bodies and sometimes the adjacent disc space. This is an infectious process, which is why it's described as acute or chronic inflammation of bone. This differs from inflammation of the spinal cord itself (myelitis), which would involve neural tissue rather than bone. It also differs from degenerative spine disease, which involves wear-and-tear changes like disc degeneration or facet joint arthropathy without a primary infectious bone inflammation. Neoplastic bone growth refers to tumors, not an infectious inflammatory process. So the best description emphasizes infection of bone tissue in the vertebrae with an inflammatory response, potentially presenting with back pain and systemic signs and requiring targeted antibiotic therapy.

10. Sympathetic regions are located in which areas?

- A. Cranial and sacral**
- B. Cranial and thoracic**
- C. Thoracic and lumbar**
- D. Sacral and lumbar**

Sympathetic regions come from the thoracolumbar outflow, with preganglionic neurons in the spinal cord segments from T1 to L2. Their fibers leave the spinal cord, enter the sympathetic trunk, and extend along the thoracic and lumbar areas to supply various organs. This layout places sympathetic control squarely in the thoracic and lumbar regions. In contrast, the cranial and sacral regions are associated with parasympathetic outflow (cranial nerves and pelvic splanchnic nerves), not sympathetic. So the correct localization is the thoracic and lumbar regions.

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://ivca.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

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